

UC SANTA BARBARA

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Keith Hamm

UCSB kicks off MLK Day holiday weekend

Holiday events honoring Martin Luther King Jr. will begin Jan. 15 with UC Santa Barbara's traditional gathering to celebrate the famed civil rights leader.

Starting at noon at the Eternal Flame — located on the lawn between Buchanan Hall and the library — opening remarks will be made by Nebiyu Alemnew of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., of which King was an alum at Boston University. A march to North Hall will follow, with words from UCSB alum John Higgins and Gregory Freeland, president of the Martin Luther King Jr. Committee of Santa Barbara (MLKSB).

North Hall was the epicenter of a [1968 civil rights protest](#) that prompted the hiring of more African-American faculty members and the establishment of the first Black Studies Program in the UC system. The march's closing remarks will be made by Ewomazino Asidi, president of the fraternity's campus chapter and UCSB's Black Student Union.

"It is not enough to simply recite Dr. King's words or commemorate his work," said Wendy Eley Jackson, a UCSB film and media studies lecturer who serves on the MLKSB board of directors. "We must actively steward his values with clarity, resolve and humanity. A deeper, more familial understanding of his life and sacrifice reminds us why his vision remains essential not just to history, but to the moral fabric of our world today."

Over the holiday weekend, events include award-winning student poetry, a documentary screening, downtown march and a free keynote at the Arlington Theater by Leah Weber King, the civil rights leader's daughter-in-law and Jackson's longtime friend.

"Being invited to deliver remarks on the holiday honoring my father-in-law's work and spirit fills me with profound humility and purpose," King said. "His call to our higher consciousness remains as urgent today as it was in his time. In an era of division and noise, his lessons remind us that true progress comes not from the ease of indifference, but from the difficult work of examining our hearts, expanding our empathy, and answering the call to serve something greater than ourselves."

For programming details, visit mlksb.org.

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About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.